



Response Capability Enhancement Emergency Response Support

The Response Capability Enhancement program brings together a diverse group of engineers, scientists, and managers to provide technical assistance in preparing for nationally significant events.

Mission

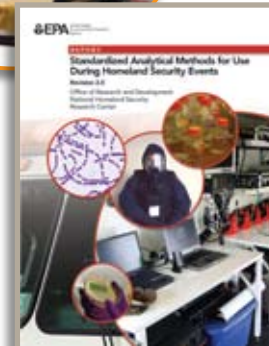
The Response Capability Enhancement (RCE) program is one of five research areas that make up EPA's National Homeland Security Research Center (NHSRC). NHSRC is helping to protect human health and the environment from acts of terrorism. RCE contributes to providing this protection in two main ways:

- Laboratory support — helping to ensure that federal, state, and local environmental laboratories can analyze contaminated samples quickly and accurately
- Emergency response support — assisting with technical information and tools to help plan for and respond to homeland security events

Stakeholders

RCE's support is available nationwide to these interested parties:

- EPA regions and program offices
- Emergency responders
- Federal, state, and local laboratories
- Commercial laboratories
- Other federal agencies involved with emergency response



Emergency Response Support Activities

RCE supports emergency responders by maintaining a virtual emergency advisory team and compiling a variety of planning and support documents. The documents include plans for continuing operations during emergencies, procedures for the Red Team, and reference tools, such as the Chemical/Biological Helpline. RCE is also responsible for coordinating Red Team activities and for maintaining technical aid capabilities, such as an EPA-wide expert database.

The Red Team includes experts from many disciplines throughout EPA's Office of Research and Development. Team members are trained in preparedness and in emergency protocols for weapons of mass destruction. During emergencies, the team can furnish scientific guidance to senior management.

For more information, go to www.epa.gov/nhsrc.



RCE's Products

These planned or completed products and activities support laboratories and emergency responders:

- A manual, *Standardized Analytical Methods for Use During Homeland Security Events* (SAM), to screen chemical, biological, and radiological contaminants
- Multiple *Standard Analytical Protocols* (SAPs) to support each method identified in the SAM
- A manual describing standardized methods for handling, packaging, and storing samples
- Protocols for screening samples at All Hazards Receipt Facilities (AHRFs), which are set up to prevent possible contamination of laboratories
- Plans and procedures for adding capacity to the existing Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) Laboratory
- Support for developing an interagency Environmental Laboratory Response Network (eLRN) to enable a consistent and coordinated response during emergencies
- Development and sponsorship of national reference labs for the eLRN
- Technical assistance for training and for responding to emergencies
- Maintenance of a 24-hour Emergency Response System
- Maintenance of databases of materials, such as Continuity of Operation tools, that may be needed during emergencies

